

## Educating a Candidate

### What you gain from educating a candidate for elected office:

- A relationship with a potential elected official or local leader who views you as a leading resource on language learning in your community
- A candidate who is better informed and able to speak to the importance of language education
- A potential champion of legislation or funding for language learning in the future

One way to influence the future public policy environment is to reach out to future policymakers before they are elected, educating them while they are still candidates about issues important to the organization. These efforts may occur through personal visits, phone calls, mailing materials, or hosting issues briefings for candidates or their staffs. We recommend the following two methods as the most effective way to deliver your message.

### Delivering the Message

- **Schedule a meeting** with the candidate and/or a member of their staff to talk about language education and its importance in the community.
- **Attend a town hall** meeting hosted by the candidate and ask him or her to share their position on language education.

### Message for Candidates

- **Encourage the adoption of language programs in the early grades**, including those that demonstrate success through immersion, dual-immersion and other models, such as content-based FLES.
  - If your state or locality has invested in language programs in the early grades, gather research about that program and share the information.
  - If you don't have an established program, reference states or localities who are using best practices:
    - State
      - At the state level, Utah has created a [dual-immersion](#) program that is close to accomplishing its goal of placing 14,000 children in 100 language programs by the end of 2014.
      - Starting early greatly promotes acquisition of a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, as young people are open to learning new languages and early language learning can lead to longer sequences and increased proficiency.
      - The benefits of early education in a second language extend beyond knowledge of the language itself, with studies showing cognitive thinking and reasoning skills improving for students learning more than one language.
    - Local
      - Glastonbury Public School's Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools ([FLES](#)) is a good local example, where all first graders take bi-weekly Spanish sessions starting in the first grade and increasing to three weekly sessions in grades 2-5.
      - Fairfax County's Elementary [World Language Programs](#) offers immersion programs in 5 languages in 17 elementary schools, starting in the early grades. Fairfax also offers a robust FLES program.
- **Promote foreign language in higher education**; explain the economic benefits of creating a workforce that is fluent in more than one language in an increasingly global marketplace.
  - Highlight the need to restore federal funding for [Title VI and Fulbright Hays](#), programs under the Department of Education that support foreign language education at US colleges and universities.
  - Reference the [Language Flagship Program](#), which is a federal program that aims to give college students measurable skills in a second language. These programs provide national models of curriculum designed to graduate students at the superior level of proficiency. Flagship has also piloted an impressive [K-12 model](#) designed to improve foreign language teaching at the elementary, middle and high school level.

- **Encourage the adoption of a bi-literacy seal**
  - A bi-literacy seal is an award given by a school, school district or county office of education that recognizes students who have attained proficiency in two or more languages by the time they graduate from high school.
  - This encourages both heritage learners and native English speakers to pursue learning a second language.
  - Bi-literacy seals act as an important signal for future employers and college admissions officers.
  - They are also an excellent way to promote competency-based success in foreign language, instead of requirements that accentuate "seat time."
  - If you reside in [California](#), [New York](#), [Illinois](#), [New Mexico](#) or [Washington](#), bi-literacy seals are already available. If you do not live in one of these states, they are a good model for encouraging your own initiative. Also, check [here](#) for a full list of states where bi-literacy seal legislation is already in progress.
- **Highlight Delaware's use of [immersion](#) as a turnaround model.**
  - Delaware provides a useful case study for demonstrating that foreign language education can be a mechanism for improving school performance overall.
  - Language learning has been proven to increase students' cognitive ability, making them stronger students all around.
  - Language learning is therefore an integral part of a comprehensive curriculum, not an optional class.
- **Promote the adoption of stipends for National Board Certified teachers.**
  - National Board Certification—an advanced teaching credential—is awarded by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to teachers who demonstrate outstanding knowledge of student needs, instructional skills, and student growth and achievement.
  - Currently, the [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#) recognizes teachers who teach French or Spanish to students ages 11-18 and whose functional ability in the language they teach is at an advanced level.
  - Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, National Board Certification will be open to all language teachers.

### Why candidates should focus on the issue

- We live in an increasingly interconnected world where American jobs and exports are more dependent than ever on foreign markets. The ability to communicate in languages and with cultures other than our own has never been more vital. And yet, Americans remain glaringly deficient in language skills.
- Only 9% of Americans speak a foreign language
- 47% of businesses reported planning to hire bilingual workers in 2013, up 8% from 2011.
- Languages other than English are critically relevant in business and why most developed countries promote instruction of other languages than just English to be competitive.
- If we are to meet the economic, diplomatic, and military challenges of the 21st century, we must make languages a national priority.
- Ensuring our children have the best chance at success in the future starts locally by giving them the tools they will need to succeed in the global economy.

### Resources

- Utah's Dual Immersion Program <http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/dualimmersion/>
- Glastonbury Public School's Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools <https://www.glastonburyus.org/curriculum/foreignlanguage/aboutus/fles/Pages/default.aspx>

- Fairfax County's Elementary World Language Programs <http://www.fcps.edu/is/worldlanguages/elementary.shtml>
- Language Flagship Program <http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/>
- Language Flagship K-12 Pilot Program: <http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/?q=content/k-12-initiatives>
- Title VI <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/title-six.html>
- California State Seal of Bi-literacy <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/sealofbiliteracy.asp>
- New York State Seal of Bi-literacy [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2012/08/new\\_law\\_makes\\_new\\_york\\_second\\_.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2012/08/new_law_makes_new_york_second_.html)
- Illinois State Seal of Bi-literacy <http://www.illinoisenedemocrats.com/index.php/sen-martinez-home/3687-martinez-announces-new-seal-of-biliteracy-for-illinois-students>
- New Mexico State Seal of Bi-literacy <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/14%20Regular/final/HB0330.pdf>
- Washington State Seal of Bi-literacy (proposed) <http://www.k12.wa.us/AchievementGap/meetings/Jan2014/SealofBiliteracyOverview.pdf>
- FAQs about Bi-literacy <http://sealofbiliteracy.org/seal-deetails>
- Delaware World Language Immersion Program [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content\\_areas/wl\\_immersion.shtml](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content_areas/wl_immersion.shtml)
- News for Delaware program expansion in 2013-2014 <http://news.delaware.gov/2013/01/30/world-language-immersion-program-expands-for-2013-2014-school-year/>
- Washington National Board Certified Teachers <https://www.k12.wa.us/Certification/nbpts/default.aspx>